

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated September 16, 2005. Claims 1 to 23 and 27 to 46 are in the application, Claims 24, 25 and 26 having been cancelled. Claims 1, 7, 15, 16, 17, 23, 27, 33, 39 and 40 are independent. Claims 33 to 46 are newly presented. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claim 27 was objected to due to an informality. Claim 27 has been amended to correct the informality. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claim 23 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Specifically, the Office Action asserts that the “information” in the phrase “a comparison result of the information” is unclear. Claim 23 has been amended. Amended Claim 23 is believed clear on its face. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Nonetheless, Applicant contends original Claim 23 is also clear on its face because the allegedly indefinite “information” clearly refers to “information required for user authentication.” Accordingly, this should be viewed as a traversal of the rejection.

Claim 16 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as allegedly directed to non-statutory subject matter. The rejection is respectfully traversed because Claim 16 is directed to a printer driver in an authentication system, and as such, is clearly statutory subject matter. See MPEP § 2106. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 7 to 9, 11, 13, 15, 22 to 27 and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,163,383 (Ota); and Claims 1 to 14, 16 to 23, and 25

to 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,313,921 (Kadowaki).
Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

The present invention relates to user authentication in print processing. According to one feature of the invention, user authentication is based on information identifying an application which has issued an instruction for printing. Accordingly, the invention can obviate the need for a user to input a user ID and password for each printing operation, and can improve security by making authentication based on print information embedded in a file or information of an application program.

Referring specifically to the claims, independent Claim 1 defines an authentication method in a print process that requires user authentication. The method comprises obtaining information identifying an application which has issued an instruction to print electronic data of a print object, and executing user authentication for approving or accounting for an output of the electronic data based on the information identifying the application.

Independent Claim 7 is a system claim that substantially corresponds to independent Claim 1.

The cited references are not seen to disclose or to fairly suggest the features of Claims 1 and 7, and in particular, are not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of obtaining information identifying an application which has issued an instruction to print electronic data of a print object and executing user authentication for approving or accounting for an output of the electronic data based on the information identifying the application.

Ota relates to a method of print processing in which a user information section produces a user identification and transmits a print operation with the user identification attached. Figure 2 of Ota shows a access controlling unit 15, which judges whether a user that issued a print job has authority for operating the print job. (column 7, lines 60 to 63). Figures 3(A) and 3(B) of Ota show examples of the data used in judging whether the user is authorized, such as “USER IDENTIFIER” column 122, such as a user name, and “USER ENVIRONMENT IDENTIFIER” column 121, such as a domain name. (column 8, line 56 to column 9, line 20). While Ota’s method might be seen to employ a user name and/or domain name, Ota’s method is not seen to employ information identifying an application which has issued an instruction to print electronic data of a print object. Accordingly, Ota is not seen to disclose or to suggest obtaining information identifying an application which has issued an instruction to print electronic data of a print object, much less disclose or suggest executing user authentication for approving or accounting for an output of the electronic data based on the information identifying the application.

Kadowaki relates to a method of including personalizing information in a print job. Figure 11B of Kadowaki shows examples of personalizing information, such as an upper-limit number of printed sheets, an available function list, setup data relating to a normal/abnormal termination report, user switch data, and a user name. (column 13, lines 15 to 23). A printer 1 performs printing based on the personalizing information. However, Kadowaki’s personalizing information is not seen to include information identifying an application which has issued an instruction to print electronic data of a print object. Accordingly, Kadowaki is not seen to disclose or to suggest obtaining information

identifying an application which has issued an instruction to print electronic data of a print object, much less disclose or suggest executing user authentication for approving or accounting for an output of the electronic data based on the information identifying the application.

Accordingly, independent Claims 1 and 7 are believed to be allowable.

Independent Claim 16 defines a printer driver in an authentication system which executes a print process that requires user authentication. The printer driver comprises a receiving step of receiving information identifying an application which has issued an instruction to print electronic data of a print object, a selecting step of selecting information required for user authentication from the information identifying the application received in the receiving step, and a sending step of sending print information appended with the selected information to a printer.

As noted above, neither Ota nor Kadowaki are seen to disclose or to suggest information identifying an application which has issued an instruction to print electronic data of a print object. Therefore, neither Ota nor Kadowaki are seen to disclose or to suggest receiving information identifying an application which has issued an instruction to print electronic data of a print object, much less disclose or suggest a selecting step of selecting information required for user authentication from the information identifying the application received in the receiving step. Accordingly, independent Claim 16 is believed to be allowable.

Independent Claim 17 defines a server in an authentication system which executes a print process that requires user authentication. The server comprises means of receiving information identifying an application which has issued an instruction to print

electronic data of a print object from a printer driver via a network, means of checking a user authentication result by comparing the received information with user authentication information which is registered in advance, and means of returning the user authentication result to the printer driver via the network.

As noted above, neither Ota nor Kadowaki are seen to disclose or to suggest information identifying an application which has issued an instruction to print electronic data of a print object. Therefore, neither Ota nor Kadowaki are seen to disclose or to suggest means of receiving information identifying an application which has issued an instruction to print electronic data of a print object from a printer driver via a network, much less disclose or suggest means of checking a user authentication result by comparing the received information with user authentication information which is registered in advance. Accordingly, independent Claim 17 is believed to be allowable.

Independent Claim 23 defines a printer in an authentication system which executes a print process that requires user authentication. The printer comprises means of receiving information identifying an application which has issued an instruction to perform the print process from a printer driver together with print information, means of inputting user authentication information, and means of executing user authentication on the basis of a comparison result of the information identifying the application and the input user authentication information.

As noted above, neither Ota nor Kadowaki are seen to disclose or to suggest information identifying an application which has issued an instruction to print electronic data of a print object. For similar reasons, neither Ota nor Kadowaki are seen to disclose or to suggest means of receiving information identifying an application which has issued an

instruction to perform the print process from a printer driver together with print information, much less disclose or suggest means of executing user authentication on the basis of a comparison result of the information identifying the application and the input user authentication information. Accordingly, independent Claim 23 is believed to be allowable.

Independent Claim 27 defines an information processing apparatus communicating with an external information processing apparatus performing a user authentication for a print process. The apparatus comprises extracting means of extracting information identifying an application which has issued an instruction to print electronic data of a print object, and output means of outputting the information extracted by the extracting means to the external information processing apparatus to use the information for a user authentication for the print process.

As noted above, neither Ota nor Kadowaki are seen to disclose or to suggest information identifying an application which has issued an instruction to print electronic data of a print object. As such, neither Ota nor Kadowaki are seen to disclose or to suggest extracting means of extracting information identifying an application which has issued an instruction to print electronic data of a print object, much less disclose or suggest output means of outputting the information extracted by the extracting means to the external information processing apparatus to use the information for a user authentication for the print process. Accordingly, independent Claim 27 is believed to be allowable.

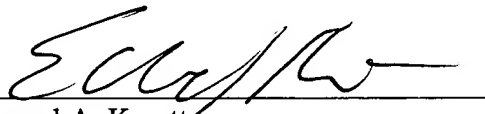
Newly-added independent Claims 33, 39 and 40 define user authentication methods, and are believed to be allowable for reasons similar to those noted above.

The other claims in the application are each dependent from the independent claims and are believed to be allowable over the applied references for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

No other matters being raised, it is believed that the entire application is fully in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office by telephone at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'E. Kmett', is written over a horizontal line.

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